

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: March 9, 2021
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others participating via zoom: Marj Wexler, Mary McGurn, Steve Hayward(National Grid), Kevin Zurrin, David Seligman, Mary McGurn, Laura Allen, Chuck Ogden, James Kelly, Marilyn Bloom, Fred and Donna Gordan, Eileen Vining, Juliette Haas, Nick Keene, Jared Kelly

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the February 23, 2021 and March 2, 2021 minutes were accepted with edits.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

At 10:02 am the hearing for a pole location requested by National Grid was called to order. Steven Hayward represented National Grid. One pole is needed for service to a new construction near 71 Blunt Road. Marilyn Bloom was concerned that the pole was on her property. The pole will actually be in the towns road right of way. The request was approved. Hearing closed at 10:10am

The Board has evaluated each of the two proposals received for the grant administration of the \$1.3 million dollar Community Development Block grant for housing rehabilitation, that Egremont is the lead town in with Great Barrington and Sandisfield,. The proposal received were from Baily Boyde Associates and Calyptus Group. Vice-Chairman Lucinda Vermeulen said that she scored Baily Boyde hirer as they have years of experience in the field, have specialized in the CDBG program, and have worked with the Town in the past. She moved to accept the proposal from Baily Boyde. Board member Brazie concurred and added that Calyptus had no experience with the Massachusetts CDBG program and in fact had a focus on transportation issues so she scored Boyde as Highly Advantageous and only scored Calyptus as advantageous. Brazie seconded the motion. Chairman McGurn agreed adding that Calyptus was a small company with less experience. The Board voted unanimously to award to Baily Boyde Associates. The price proposals were then opened: Baily Boyde's price was \$164,000 while Calyptus Group's price was \$167,100.

TOWN OFFICIALS:

Chuck Ogden, Chairman of the Board of Health, asked to be included on the agenda for next regular meeting, which will be March 23, to discuss vaccination for Covid among Town employees.

NEW BUSINESS:

Nick Keene, purveyor of the Barn at the Egremont Village Inn, has applied for a special license for outdoor liquor service as allowed by COVID-19 guidelines. The Board voted unanimously to approve the request with a deadline of 60 days after the end of the COVID-19 state emergency as allowed under the guidelines.

Jared Kelly, Planning Board Chairman, presented an amended definition of Agriculture in the Zoning Bylaws which will exclude the growing, cultivation, distribution, testing, dispensation of marijuana. The Board voted unanimously to accept the proposed amendment as submitted and will submit back to the Planning Board for a public hearing. The amendment will be on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. This will be a zoning bylaw amendment. Jared then updated the Board on the status of the marijuana bylaw. The Planning Board is close but not there yet so will not have a proposed bylaw for the Annual Town Meeting, which all agreed was not the appropriate place for such an important, and likely controversial issue. There is the possibility the Planning Board may move forward with some questions on banning certain retail establishments to determine what the town wants. Those bans would be general bylaws requiring a majority vote at town meeting and on the ballot. Likewise, it was felt these questions would not be best served at the Annual Town Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Jim Kelly and David Seligman were present to answer any questions in regards to the Forest Stewardship Program plan presented at a prior meeting. The need for an updated biological management plan for the property was referred to the Conservation Commission. The plan was unanimously approved by the Board as presented. It was noted that there is a deed note for 5 acres surrounding a residence that is in the middle of this property that the Board may be interested in. In 2023 or 2024 the Town will have the option to renew the restriction or it reverts to the Town's ownership to do with as it wants to.

Fred Gordan presented his draft educational materials for the CPA which the Board, by majority vote, agreed to place on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. He is contacting stack holders such as other town boards and local organizations to garner support. There has been some concern expressed over a 3% surcharge but the fact that the state share is higher to the town's with a 3%, and that the first \$100,000 of property value is removed makes this an affordable option for the town. Finance Committee Chair Laura Allen noted that the Finance Committee did not support this in the past and has generally been opposed.

The Board voted unanimously to appoint Will Conklin, Lucinda Vermeulen, Juliette Haas, Ed McCormick, Jim Noe and Dave Rejeski to the Municipal Vulnerability Program Planning Committee. There will be a core team of others that do not need to be appointed. At the Board's March 23 meeting, the MVP Planning Committee will present Weston & Sampson as their recommended certified provider for the program.

Due to the lack of available electrical source and funds for the requirements not covered by the grant, the Town will not apply for a grant to pay for an electric vehicle charging station. The Town is not ready at this time. Vice-Chairman Vermeulen will let Patrick Riordan know that this is off the table for now but may be a consideration in the future.

The Board was quite excited to hear from MassDOT that they have agreed to fund a lighting project in the Route 23/41 reconstruction project. The draft proposal by the engineer included 40 overhead lights with one acorn light along the sidewalk, at intersections and crosswalks. The Board has approved the concept and adopted the "Taunton" fixture as the town's standard roadside light fixture. The Egremont Historical Commission has to approve as well.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the immediate costs and ADA costs for the Library grant application to the Mass Historical Commissions Mass Preservation Program Funding program. That estimate is \$252,300. The maximum grant award is \$100,000. The Town hopes to get at least \$50,000. The Town has to fund the balance of the project and place a preservation restriction in perpetuity on the property. The Board unanimously agreed that Chairman McGurn would sign the grant

application and voted that the town intends to execute a preservation restriction in perpetuity on the property.

BUDGET/TOWN MEETING:

The board discussed the options of holding town meeting this year while still in a pandemic. The meeting could be held outside at French Park as last year, though the weather in early May can still be very winter like. Catamount's new lodge is available for a fee of \$100. The auditorium at Mount Everett is also available but a fees have been implemented to cover the necessary safety precautions because of the pandemic. The Board voted unanimously to change the date to June 8, the time to 5pm, and plan a meeting outdoors at French Park. The issue of vote counting was of concern to Town Clerk Juliette Haas, but with extra counters who are paid there shouldn't be any more difficulty then there was at the last town meetings.

The Board voted unanimously to not change the date of the annual election from May 11 and to hold the election at the Town Hall. Employees will be asked to work from home that day.

COVID-19:

Emergency Management Director Ed McCormick will be asked to the MEMA Statewide Assessment survey for the town.

FOLLOW-UPS/UPDATES:

The Mount Washington Selectmen have reported that they have accepted and will place on their Annual Town Meeting Warrant the fire services fee assessment of \$30,821.80 for FY 22.

The School District Planning Board has been awarded the technical assistance grant. The request for funds for assistance from the town's can be lowered to \$8,000 from the original \$15,000 request.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The Board will meet on March 16 for a budget workshop and March 23 in regular session, both at 10am via zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 12:14pm.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.21/mar9

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.